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**Transportation Committee**

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**SSB 6527**

**Brief Description:** Extending the negotiation period for the Milwaukee Road trail.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Mulliken, Haugen and Sheldon; by request of Department of Transportation).

<p><b>Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extending the negotiation period for the Milwaukee Road trail.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 2/21/06

**Staff:** Teresa Berntsen (786-7301).

**Background:**

In 1980, the Milwaukee Road railroad declared bankruptcy, sold some of its properties, and salvaged its track. In 1981, the Legislature appropriated \$3.5 million to purchase 213 miles of the railroad's right of way in eastern Washington.

The right of way owned by the state was eventually put under the management and control of three state agencies: the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

During the 1995 Legislative interim, the Legislative Transportation Committee convened a Freight Rail and Freight Mobility Task Force to examine the Milwaukee Road corridor's potential for relieving freight congestion. The task force recommended resuming freight rail service over the portion of the former Milwaukee Road railroad running from Ellensburg to Lind.

1996 legislation consolidated state-owned portions of the former Milwaukee Road railroad from Ellensburg to Lind into a single owner, the DOT. The DOT was charged with management and control of this corridor, and was authorized to negotiate a franchise agreement with a qualified rail carrier to operate service over the line.

The legislation creating the consolidated transportation corridor was to sunset if the DOT did not enter into a franchise agreement by July 1, 1999. Management of the trail between Ellensburg and Lind would revert back to the three state agencies. In 1999 the Legislature extended the deadline for the DOT to enter into a franchise agreement to July 1, 2006.

**Summary of Bill:**

The deadline for DOT to enter into a franchise agreement for rail service over the Ellensburg to Lind portion of the Milwaukee Road corridor is extended three years.

If an agreement is not entered into by July 1, 2009, the transportation corridor will revert to the prior ownership and management by the DOT, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, and the DNR.

The DNR is authorized to transfer management authority of the transportation corridor to the State Parks and Recreation Commission, upon mutual agreement of the agencies.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.